

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 2694

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, PFOR, SZ, WB, US, UK, FR, UR, GW, GE
SUBJ: CIVAIR: INTERFLUG OVERFLIGHTS OF THE FRG:
LUFTHANSA CONNECTION

REFS: A) BONN 20677; B) 74 STATE 26556; C) 74 BERLIN 349;
D) 74 BERLIN 478; E) STATE 299836

1. SUMMARY: ELEMENTS OF FRG MAY THINK THAT LUFTHANSA TEGEL RIGHTS CAN BE EXCHANGED FOR INTERFLUG OVERFLIGHTS RIGHTS TO ZURICH, BUT WE ARE SKEPTICAL SOVIETS/GDR WILL ACQUIESCE, CONSIDERING MUCH STEEPER PRICE THEY DEMANDED IN 1974. CURRENT FRG PRACTICE OF UNILATERALLY GRANTING OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS FOR INTERFLUG/SCHOENEFELD FLIGHTS DETRACTS FROM ROLE OF ALLIED CARRIERS IN PROVIDING AIR SERVICE TO BERLIN. TO IMPRESS ON GDR IMPORTANCE OF COUNTER-CONCESSION, WE WOULD HOPE THAT FRG WOULD TURN DOWN NEXT OVERFLIGHT REQUEST FROM INTERFLUG. END SUMMARY.

2. MISSION WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORTS TALING POINTS FOR BONN GROUP CONTAINED REF E. WE BELIEVE BONN GROUP IS BEST PLACED TO PERSUADE FRG TO FACTOR INTO ITS CONSIDERATION OF GDR REQUESTS BOTH THE COMMERCIAL
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CONSIDERATIONS OF WSB AVIATION AND THE LARGER POLIT-

ICAL ISSUES INVOLVED. IN OTHER WORDS, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT SHOULD NOT RULE ON GDR OVERFLIGHT REQUESTS IN A ROUTINE FASHION, NOR SHOULD THOSE FRG OFFICIALS INVOLVED WITH INNER-GERMAN PLANNING BE PERMITTED TO USE GDR'S DESIRE TO ENHANCE STATUS OF SCHOENEFELD AS A NEGOTIATING CHIP IN FRG/GDR RELATIONS. WE NOTE THAT STORY ABOUT GRANTING GDR OVERFLIGHTS RIGHTS FOR SCHEDULED SCHOENEFELD/ZURICH SERVICE AND NEWS OF 16 CHARTER FLIGHTS ALREADY CONDUCTED THIS YEAR OCCURRED AT ABOUT TIME AS SENAT HERE ASKED ALLIES TO INVOKE BK/O(62)5 TO PREVENT INTER-FLUG FROM OPENING SALES OFFICE IN WSB.

3. ON SPECIFIC POINTS EMBASSY'S REPORT REF A THAT FRG LIKELY TO COUNTER GDR OVERFLIGHT REQUEST WITH DEMAND FOR LUFTHANSA RIGHTS TO TEGEL RESURFACES PROPOSAL VIRTUALLY DORMANT SINCE 1974. ADDRESSEES MAY RECALL THAT CONCLUSION OF SOVIET/FRG BILATERAL AVIATION AGREEMENT IN 1971 PROVIDED FOR TEGEL STOP BY LUFTHANSA ON ITS FRANKFURT/MOSCOW/TOKYO ROUTE, BUT THAT ADDITIONAL UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT OF FOUR BERLIN POWERS NEEDED TO PERMIT LUFTHANSA TO FLY THROUGH 4-POWER AIRSPACE WHICH SURROUNDS BERLIN (KNOWN AS BERLIN CONTROL ZONE-BCZ). THEN FOREIGN MINISTER SCHEEL RAISED THE ISSUE WITH THE ALLIES IN THE SPRING OF 1973 AND EGON BAHR FOLLOWED UP WITH THE DEPARTMENT IN EARLY 1974 (REF B). AFTER EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION, BONN GROUP AGREED TO DEMARCHE TO SOVIETS, WHICH WAS MADE FEBRUARY 25, 1974 BY CHAIRMAN POLAD (US) TO SOVIET COUNSELOR BELETSKIY. POLAD NOTED WESTERN ALLIES HAD GRANTED TO LUFTHANSA LANDING RIGHTS IN WESTERN SECTORS. HE INVITED SOVIETS TO PARTICIPATE IN FOUR POWER TECHNICAL TALKS TO PERMIT LUFTHANSA TO OPERATE SAFELY IN BCZ (REF C).

4. SOVIET RESPONSE GIVEN ON MARCH 14, 1974 MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD ONLY CONSIDER MATTER IN CONTEXT OF "THE SOLUTION OF THE ENTIRE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION WITH WEST BERLIN (SIC)." SOVIETS CONFIDENTIAL

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ALSO SAID ANY SETTLEMENT "PRESUPPOSES RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE GDR." SOVIETS ADDED THAT THIS APPROACH TO PROBLEM HAD BEEN ENVISAGED WHEN SOVIET-FRG BILATERAL AVIATION AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED (REF D). CLEARLY, SOVIETS WERE SEEKING EITHER A GDR VOTE OR VETO IN AN EXTENSIVELY MODIFIED AIR REGIME FOR BERLIN, WHICH OF COURSE WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO ALLIES. WE SEE NO REASON FOR SOVIETS TO SETTLE

FOR LESS IN 1976 THAN IN 1974.

5. IN SUMMARY, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE FRG MADE MORE AWARE OF REAL PROBLEMS TO BERLIN AIR SERVICES AND HENCE TO VIABILITY OF CITY IN INTERFLUG EFFORTS TO MOUNT INCREASING COMPETITION FROM SCHOENEFELD AT PRICES GDR IS FREE TO FIX. ALLIED BONN GROUP REPS COULD IN THIS RESPECT BUTTRESS EFFORTS OF SEN. STOBBE AND OTHER BERLIN OFFICIALS ON THIS SUBJECT. FRG HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY SLOW TO REALIZE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TURKISH WORKER FLIGHTS, MERCY FLIGHTS VIA SCHOENEFELD, ETC. ON BERLIN AVIATION, WHICH IS CRITICAL FACTOR IN CITY'S FUTURE. IMPORTANCE OF MEANINGFUL COUNTER-CONCESSION COULD BE BROUGHT TO GDR IF FRG WERE TO DENY OVERFLIGHT OF SCHOENEFELD/ ZURICH FLIGHT PLANNED FOR DEC 30, ASSUMING IT NOT ALREADY APPROVED. ALLIED CARRIERS IN BERLIN COULD EASILY LAY ON FLIGHT TO ACCOMMODATE DIVERTED PASSENGERS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT BONN GROUPMIGHT RECOMMEND SUCH ACTION. GEORGE

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